

asked MacMichael, looking as puzzled as ever. Wilson hesitated for a second.

"Why," he said, speaking very slowly, "I knew that if my own connection with the line were known, people would wish to come to me direct in certain dealings and would ask a good many impossible things of the service,—things they would never think of asking of the company in London," and he laughed.

"It would take a great deal of time from my zoölogical work," he went on, "and besides I wanted to see if I could accomplish a number of things independent of any influence the ownership of the Northumberland boats might possibly give me. This was my real reason for keeping the secret, after all."

"Yes! you brute!" laughed the girl, "and one of those things was getting me to promise to marry you. You thought if I knew that, instead of being a young man with a fortune consisting of face and brains and prospects, you were the sole owner of a steamship line paying fifty per cent. or some such ridiculous dividend, that I might think more of you."

"I thought nothing of the sort," was the reply; "but I thought that my own belief in your common sense—and some of your other attributes—might be the result of my judgment being warped by outward things, and now I've proved that it